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Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 RSC-01 L-03

PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 OPR-02 M-02 OMB-01

TRSE-00 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /092 W
---------- 033049
R 260847Z JUN 74
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHCC 4555
INFO SECDEF
CINCPAC
CINCPACAF
13TH AF CLARK AB
13AF ADVON

S E C R E T BANGKOK 10448

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, TH
SUBJECT: US FORCE REDUCTIONS: PLANNING STANDBY STATUS OF UBON RTAB

REFS: (A) STATE 058918; (B) MACT 250031Z AUG 73 (NOTAL)

1. WORKING WITHIN PARAMETERS OF WASHINGTON DECISIONS (REF A), 13AF HAS PREPARED DETAILED PLANNING FOR PHASING OUT US AIR FORCE OPERATIONS AT UBON RTAB BY NOVEMBER 1. ALTHOUGH ALL DETAILS NOT YET FINALIZED, PLANS ENVISAGE RESIDUAL US FORCE OF LESS THAN 400 AMERICANS AND ABOUT THE SAME NUMBER OF LOCAL NATIONALS, INCLUDING EMPLOYEES OF BASE FACILITIES CONTRACTOR AND THAI SECURITY GUARDS.

2. EMBASSY AND MACTHAI OUTLINED PLANS FOR DRAWDOWN OF PERSONNEL AND FACILITIES TO GENERAL KRIANGSAK OF SUPREME COMMAND JUNE 21 AND INVITED SUPREME COMMAND TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES TO VISIT THE BASE AND SEE FOR
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THEMSELVES HOW THE PROJECT LINES UP.

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3. RTG HAS AS YET MADE NO OFFICIAL PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT
OF PLANS FOR CLOSING OUT US OPERATIONS AT UBON, SINCE
SUPREME COMMAND EXCISED THIS FROM PROPOSED MAY 31
PRESS RELEASE. WE ANTICIPATE THAT JUNE 30 ANNOUNCE-
MENT ON US TROOP REDUCTIONS WILL INCLUDE MENTION OF
UBON. PROVINCE GOVERNOR, BRIEFED BY CONSULATE UDORN
WITH USAF BASE COMMANDER PRESENT, HAS GIVEN THE STORY
IN SUBSTANCE TO THE PRESS, BUT USAF OFFICERS TO DATE
HAVE BEEN RESTRICTED BY SECURITY RESSTRICTIONS TO "NO COMMENT" IN
ANSWERING QUERIES FROM LOCAL EMPLOYEES, PRESS AND PUBLIC.

4. PRESSURES FOR PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT HAVE MOUNTED BECAUSE OF
CONTINUING RUMORS IN THE AREA AND NECESSITY TO UNDERTAKE
PREPARATORY WORK WHILE AMERICAN PERSONNEL STILL
AVAILABLE. ALUMINUM APRON MATTING IS
BEING TAKEN UP FOR LATER DISPOSITION, AND SOME NAF
LOCAL EMPLOYEES WERE SERVED RIF NOTICES JUNE 15 AS
PREPARATORY STEP TO REDUCING CLUB OVERHEAD COSTS AND
TO GAIN GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN FUTURE LAY-OFFS. DIRECT
EFFORTS BY MACTHAI AND RTG AGENCIES TO ASSIST DISPLACED
WORKERS HAVE BEEN DEFERRED PENDING GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENT.

5. WHEN THE FACT OF THE CLOSING OF USAF
OPERATIONS AT UBON AND THE DATE FOR GOING TO STANDBY
STATUS ARE ANNOUNCED, WE MUST ANTICIPATE A POSSIBLE
SURGE IN PILFERAGE AND INCIDENTS AS LOCAL NATIONALS
SEEK MAXIMUM SHORT-TERM ADVANTAGE BEFORE THE GIS LEAVE.
WE BELIEVE THE EXPERIENCE GAINED DURING THE PREVIOUS
CLOSING OF TAKHLI AND THE SUBSEQUENT STRIPPING BY
PERSONS UNKNOWN UNTIL THE RTG/RTAF COULD MOBILZE
EFFECTIVELY MUST BE CONSIDERED. WE ALSO FORESEE PRO-
BABLE CONTINUING EFFORTS TOPILFER FROM US FACILITIES
DURING STANDBY PERIOD; 13AF IS ACTIVELY CONSIDERING
POSSIBILITY OF INCREASING USAF SECURITY CONTINGENTS AND
TAKING OTHER MEASURES TO MAINTAIN MINIMAL BASE FOR
RESURGE CONTINGENCIES.

6. EMBASSY CONCURS IN DRAWDOWN PLANNING PREPARED BY
USAF, BUT SUGGESTS THAT URGENT ATTENTION SHOULD BE GIVEN
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TO POSSIBILITY OF MOVING A FURTHER STEP BEYOND THE
NOVEMBER 1 TARGET TO INVOLVE RTG MORE DIRECTLY IN
OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF BASE DURING THE STANDBY
PERIOD. WE REFER TO CONCEPT OUTLINED REF B FOR CON-
TRACTUAL ARRANGEMENT WITH MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OR SUPREME
COMMAND, WHICH WE BLIEVE WOULD OFFER BETTER GUARANTEE
AGAINST PILFERAGE. HISTORICALLY, DURING OUR PRESENCE
IN THE FAR EAST, US SECURITY PERSONNEL HAVE HAD A DIF-

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FICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE TASK, IN SECURING US MILI-
TARY INSTALLATIONS, EQUIPMENT, AND MUNITIONS FROM THEIR
ORIENTAL HOSTS. ADDITIONALLY, SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT WOULD
AID IN EFFORTS TO ECONOMIZE ON USAF PERSONNEL IN COUNTRY
AND REDUCE LIKELIHOOD OF INCIDENTS INVOLVING US SERVICE-
MEN OR PUBLIC CRITICISM OF US RESIDUAL PRESENCE.
FURTHERMORE, ALTHOUGH THE DURATION OF OUR NEED FOR
STANDBY ARRANGEMENTS AT UBON AS PROBABLY LIMITED, WE
BELIEVE SUCH A CONTRACT ARRANGEMENT COULD BE A VALUABLE
PRECEDENT FOR LONGER TERM AGREEMENTS FOR RETAINING
REENTRY RIGHTS AND RESIDUAL TENANT UNITS AT UTAPAO/
SATTAHIP AIR AND SEE PORT COMPLEXES.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: WE URGE REVIEW OF STANDBY BASE
CONCEPT IN LIGHT OF REF B AND ADDITIONAL FORWARD PLANNING
TO TEST THIS CONCEPT WITH RESPECT TO UBON.
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